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ABSTRACT

The writing and art program described in this lesson plan has middle school students examine a work of art of their choice to discern purpose, audience, form and function and use transitional and comparative vocabulary to discuss similarities between writing and painting an idea or story. During the three 50-minute lessons, students will demonstrate proficiency in using the writing process; make connections between prior knowledge and new information using prewriting strategies; write in response to a self-selected example of non-print media, demonstrating an awareness of purpose, audience, voice, and style; note relevant information using listening and visual literacy; synthesize information in order to produce a piece of writing that demonstrates an understanding of comparison, analogy, and metaphor; and use a variety of technology and multi-media resources. The instructional plan, lists of web resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. One handout and a rubric example are attached. (PM)

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# Creative Communication Frames: Discovering Similarities Between Writing and Art


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## Grade Band

6-8

## Estimated Lesson Time

Three 50-minute sessions

## Overview

These activities were designed to compare writing with Impressionism, a guide for viewing paintings in the context of communication with originality and imagery. They could be adapted to any art form, developing the writing process with a focus on comparison and analysis.

Modest Petrovitch Moussorgsky (1839-1881) wrote, "Art is a means of communicating with people, not an end in itself." Students examine a work of art of their choice to discern purpose, audience, form and function. Their observations and reflections use transitional and comparative vocabulary to discuss similarities between writing and painting an idea or story.

## From Theory to Practice

Studies done by Silver, Strong,and Perini (2000) show there are relationships between multiple intelligences (Howard Gardner)and learning styles (Carl Jung). For example, the 'sensing-style' learner often corresponds with the bodily-kinesthetic student. 'Feeling-style' learners make use of their interpersonal or intrapersonal intelligences. Diverse learning styles can be addressed by asking questions that require explanation; using one's imagination; and reflecting upon/sharing feelings.

Schema theory supports brainstorming and clustering as ways to approach writing with purpose and confidence. Bloom's Taxonomy ranks analysis, synthesis and evaluation at the top of the congitive matrix. Bruner (1990) suggests that students make meaning within a cultural context. Also, research has validated the importance of student choice of writing topics. In this lesson, the importance of individual choice is extended to non-print media which reflects a cultural context.

## Student Objectives

Students will

- demonstrate proficiency in using the writing process.
- make connections between prior knowledge and new information using prewriting strategies.
- write in response to a self-selected example of nonprint media, demonstrating an awareness of purpose, audience, voice, and style
- note relevant information using listening and visual literacy.
- synthesize information in order to produce a piece of writing that demonstrates an understanding of comparison, analogy, and metaphor.

CS 512 036



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- use a variety of technology and multi-media resources.

## Resources

- Observation Guide Handout
- Rubric Example Handout
- Le WebLouvre Web Site
- Art Museum Network News Web Site
- Harvard University Art Museums Web Site
- ArtsEdNet Web Site
- Web Museum, Paris Web Site
- American Family Web Site

## Instructional Plan

### Preparation

- Provide choices of non-print media for student viewing (field trip to local gallery, or prepare a classroom "gallery" of prints).
- Preview URLs for art resources and virtual tours.
- Prepare student handouts—a guide for viewing and comparison.

### Instruction and Activities

*First Class Period*

1. Display a print from one of the Impressionists (Monet, Renoir, Manet)—The painting could be selected from one of the virtual galleries found in the Web resources.
2. In a large group brainstorming session, note and record details of what the students see at a distance. Select several students to study the painting closely, making verbal observations that are recorded.
3. Repeat with several others viewing up close. Again in large group, discuss differences noted when painting is viewed closely. Discussion becomes more specific as students use the handout to record specific details.
4. Discuss different perspectives from distant and close viewing.
5. Now shift the discussion to identifying ways in which writing a scene or description is similar to painting:

| | |
|---|---|
| Author's Word Choice | Artist's Brushstrokes, Color, and Medium Selected |
| Author's Point of View | Artist's Perspective |
| Author's Purpose | Artist's Purpose |
| Author's Main Idea | Artist's Subject |
| Author's Setting—time, place | Artist's period, time, place |

List words writers use to help readers understand similarities and differences when two concepts are being compared. Small groups can develop word lists then combine into whole class working word bank. (Examples: compare, contrast, metaphor, analogy, alike, similar to). Work bank should be entered in students' journals for future reference, or transcribed to the computer and printed out.

*Second Class Period*

The class may be viewing a virtual museum or on a field trip to a local gallery. Students will choose a—close, distant, close again—and record their observerations based on the terms identified in the previous session (student handout may be modified to meet class needs). After individuals or partners complete their viewing and analysis, meet as a whole group for debriefing, sharing what was observed.

*Third Class Period*

1. Discuss the art in general terms of analogy and metaphor. Seek examples of specific paintings and how they demonstrate communication of an idea or feelings. Develop a literary term for each of the terms used to analyze the art form.

   Title _____
   Artist_____ (Author)
   Time painting was done _____(setting)
   Brushstrokes _____ (words,genre,style)
   Lines _____ (style, form)
   Colors_____ (word choice, style)
   Shadings _____ (inferences)
   Shadows _____ (inferences,opinion)
   Perspective _____(point of view, bias)
   Focal Point _____(point of view)
   Background _____ (setting)
   Subject of painting _____ (main idea)

2. Discuss this as a prewriting framework. Talk through, verbally model, how these ideas can shape a discussion of art as a means of communication, comparing the similarities between writing and painting—both the artist and the author are portraying an idea, images, a story, and/or an opinion.
3. The students will use this framework to express their thoughts about ways in which the process of writing is similar to the process of creating art, using the transitional, comparative vocabulary developed for the class word bank. They will use examples from the nonprint media they have studied, and perhaps examples from literature. The comparative piece should be at least five paragraphs, revised, edited, and word processed.

**Web Resources**

Web Museum, Paris
http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/

A virtual museum of famous works of art. The Paul Cezanne collection shows the transition from Impressionism to Cubism. This Web museum offers many other works of art, plus a link to a glossary of painting styles, which provides specific vocabulary for young authors and artists.

Harvard University Art Museums
http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/

Virtual access to one third of the art collections at Harvard University Art Museums. The Fogg Art Museum houses one of America's finest collections of Impressionist and post-Impressionist art. Look for Picasso here too, as well as collections of photographs, prints, and drawings.

Art Museum Network News
http://www.amnnews.com/museums.html

The Art Museum Network offers links to the Art Museum Image Consortium, with over 100,000 works of art available. Thumbnail images available at no cost and subsciptions available to schools

for educational use of museum multi-media.

ArtsEdNet
http://www.getty.edu/artsednet/images/index.html
Image galleries and exhibitions are indexed by artist, by title, by date, and by gallery topics. Example—Jacob Lawrence: Storyteller—his work appears in an image gallery with information about the size and media of each piece, accompanied by related history lessons on "The Migration of the Negro."

American Family
http://www.pbs.org/americanfamily/mural.html
As part of multimedia projects on the American Family, the mural as an art form is explored as a predominant art form in Los Angeles. Click to view images such as "Waiting for the End of the Twentieth Century" by Alexi Begov, Russia.

Le WebLouvre
http://mm.lex.esu10.org/~sandozs/Art.html
The Art Room at the Louvre Museum in Paris allows you to tour this famous collection. The works of French Impressionists Claude Monet and Renoir can be viewed here.

### Student Assessment/Reflections

Impressionism was inspired by the music of Modest Petrovitch Moussorgsky who translated Russian literature into musical genres. Understanding of the similarities between the creative processes of composition—writing, art, and music#151;could be assessed through extended synthesis, after listening to Moussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" (Maurice Ravel's 1922 orchestration). Student responses could be noted through contributions to a large group discussion or reflective journal entries (written or drawn).

The students' written responses to the painting (or other art form) can be assessed with a rubric based on

- their use of transitional and comparative words (e.g. alike, similar to, close to, both, also, not only, therefore, consequently, next, in fact, still, besides, finally, furthermore, consequently)
- their inclusion of literary terms applied to the non-print media (see previewing and prewriting handouts)
- evidence of careful editing and proofreading

Students could be given the option to demonstate their understanding by creating an original art form—computer generated, mixed media, musical piece or mix, etc.—accompanied by a written piece that could be used as a gallery print release about a "newly recognized artist". The written piece would address the artist's perspective/point of view; choice of media; purpose; focal point/main idea; and technique. These pieces could develop into a classroom or school exhibit—a form of publication.

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## NCTE/IRA Standards

1 - Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

4 - Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5 - Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

6 - Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

7 - Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8 - Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

9 - Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

10 - Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

11 - Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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Take a close look at the example of Impressionism, noting the details of the brushstrokes, lines, colors, shadings, shadows, and shapes. Choose one painting (or other work of art) and record the details.

Title _____

Artist _____

Time/period of painting _____

Brushstrokes _____

Lines _____

Colors _____

Shadings _____

Perspective (Where is the focal point?) _____

What is in the background? _____

What is the subject of the painting? _____

Now stand back and view the painting from a different perspective. From this point of view, record what you see:

Brushstrokes _____

Lines _____

Colors _____

Shadings _____

Perspective _____

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Where is the focal point?

_____

What is the background? _____

What is the subject of the painting? _____

Move close again, and recheck your observations. View once again from a distance.)

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# Rubric Example

| | Beginning 1 | Developing 2 | Accomplished 3 | Exemplary 4 | Score |
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| Contributions to group discussions. | Participation was minimal. | After looking at the painting, observations were made about the work as a whole. | Participation included details about artwork from several viewpoints. | Comments about the art form use genre specific vocabulary (subject/title; lines/shades of color/mood). Asked related questions. | |
| Journal Entries/Word Bank | Few words transcribed from class discussions. | Word list generated from discussions recorded in journal. | New vocabulary used in context in journal entries. | Journal entries record new vocabulary discussed in class with comments or questions added. Comparative words used; mention of similarities in creative processes. | |
| Written comparison of similarities between art and writing. (Students may choose a non-text comparison.) | Few ideas expressed, with little or no usage of new vocabulary. | Some new vocabulary used on proper context. Mention made of writing and art as creative processes. Some comparative words used. | Writing shows several examples of comparisons. Use of 'alike', 'similar to', 'next', etc. for comparison. Writing AND an art form are mentioned. | Detailed examples of perspective/ point of view; purpose; focal point/main idea; technique/genre. Comparative vocabulary used as well as words specific to art and writing. | |
| Correct usage and writing mechanics. | Complete sentences with correct capitalization and punctuation. | Final draft utilizes complete sentences and one main idea per paragraph. | Very few errors in mechanics. Comparison with first drafts shows evidence of revision, editing and proofreading. | Appropriate paragraphing. Title capitalized. No spelling or punctuation errors. Evidence of careful revision, editing and proofreading. | |

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